

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of the present application is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-6 remain active in the application.

Claim 1 has been amended to recite providing a plurality of grinding wheels, and selecting a predetermined grinding wheel from the plurality of grinding wheels prior to the step of simultaneously grinding plural grinding portions of a workpiece using plural grinding wheels. This is believed to conform to the examiner's suggested amendment for overcoming the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, and so this rejection is believed to be moot.

Concerning the repeated rejection of Claims 1-5 under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as being anticipated by EP '621, the Office Action did not explicitly state that the above amendment would also be effective for overcoming this rejection, but applicants respectfully submit that the above amendment also renders moot the prior art rejection.

Applicants had previously pointed out that EP '621 does not disclose that grinding by a predetermined grinding wheel is terminated prior to the termination of grinding by the other grinding wheel since, if it were known in advance in EP '621 that the predetermined one of the grinding wheels 14 or 15 will have finished the grinding operation before the other wheel, there would be no need to test whether the grinding portion ground by an undetermined "either" wheel has reached the required value. In response, the examiner has stated that "predetermined" could mean determined at the time of testing the diameter of the ground portions. However, the presently claimed steps of providing a plurality of grinding wheels, and selecting a predetermined grinding wheel from the plurality of grinding wheels prior to the step of simultaneously grinding plural grinding portions of a workpiece using plural grinding wheels, precludes determining the predetermined grinding wheel at a time during the grinding operation.

The above point was discussed with Examiner Rachuba on May 9, 2005. As a result of this discussion, the examiner tentatively indicated that the present amendment would indeed overcome the rejection of Claims 1-5 under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as being anticipated by EP '621.

Applicants therefore believe that the present application is in a condition for allowance and respectfully solicit an early Notice of Allowability.

Respectfully submitted,

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